



# NRC NEWS

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## **NRC STAFF ISSUES BULLETIN ON REACTOR CONTAINMENT SUMP BLOCKAGE ISSUE**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued a Bulletin to licensees operating pressurized water reactors (PWR), requesting information on how licensees are dealing with the potential for post-accident debris blocking a water recirculation sump.

Operating experience at boiling water reactors, as well as recent research, has indicated post-accident debris could block PWR containment building sumps, which help provide water for cooling the reactor core and containment in an accident. Licensees have 60 days to respond to the Bulletin with one of two responses:

- 1) Confirming their recirculation systems comply with regulations in light of the most recent findings, or
- 2) Describing interim compensatory measures that have been (or will be) implemented to reduce the risk of debris blockage until a compliance evaluation can be completed.

The Bulletin includes examples of compensatory measures to deal with this issue. The NRC staff plans to hold a public meeting in late June to further explain the rationale for issuing the Bulletin. Meeting details will be published as soon as they are available.

NRC staff also plans to issue a Generic Letter on the sump blockage issue to address longer-term corrective actions. The letter, which will undergo a public comment period, will request more information on what evaluations PWR licensees may find necessary to ensure their recirculation systems comply with regulations.

The Bulletin is available electronically through the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) on the NRC web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>, by entering accession number ML031600259, and will be available at the web site's Bulletins page at:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/gen-comm/bulletins/2003/> . Help in using ADAMS is available from the NRC's Public Document Room at 800/397-4209 or 301/415-4737.

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